



THE GUARDIAN

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Monthly newsletter of St. Joseph Seminary

January 2024

As we put together this final monthly issue of our newsletter for Year 2023, we are getting ready to leave the seminary for our two-week Christmas vacation. Some seminarians will fly home, two will take a train, and others who live close by will be picked up by their parents. We are all very much looking forward to the time with our families.

At the same time, we also look forward to our return in January. The seminary has become a "second family" to all of us. Even while we are home, we plan to keep in touch with our fellow seminarians. We are forming friendships here that will endure after

lot of time sledding. We also built a small ramp on the sledding hill to add to the enjoyment. As you can imagine, we like the snow, even though it has to be shoveled.

We hope you enjoy the Christmas vacation with your families. May God bless each and every one of you in the New Year of 2024.

Maternal Heart of Grace

by Marcel Mansfield, gr. 11

Think of a mother's care. Yes, think of the loving compassion of a mother who only wishes the welfare and wellbeing of her beloved children. Although having done so

January Calendar

- 4 – Classes resume
- 5 – Blessing of Epiphany water; First Friday
- 6 – Feast of the Epiphany of Our Lord
- 18 – Begin Church Unity Octave
- 19 – End of the Second Quarter
- 22 – Third Quarter begins
- 24 – Priests' visit to the seminary
- 26 – Ski Day

only wishes for us to achieve our salvation in heaven? Should we not do a little something extra to thank her and increase our devotion to her?

Since the beginning of *Saint Joseph Minor Seminary*, there has been a group which is dedicated to doing little acts for Our Blessed Mother and to foster devotion to her. This little group is known as the *Sodality of the Immaculate Heart of Mary*. Thinking that the Sodality is something mandatory or that one is looked down upon for not joining would be a mistake. It is something that is completely optional, and seminarians should only join of their own accord.

At the minor seminary reception ceremonies are held twice a year for those who want to be admitted, one in October and the other in March. Since we are occupied with the usual assignments and schedule of the day, meetings usually last about half an hour. Occurring every other week, these meetings begin with the opening

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A view of our dining room at supper time.

our time in the minor seminary has come to an end.

In January we will have a ski day. Hopefully, we will get more snow, because lately there has been very little. When we had our first real snowfall of the year a couple weeks ago, we spent a

many favors for her little ones, she – instead of being honored and praised for all the good which was done through her hands – goes without thanks and is often ignored and forgotten.

Unfortunately, this is the sad truth of our day. How could we forget the one who continually intercedes for us and

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Maternal Heart of Grace

prayers and then everyone gathers in the dining room. We begin with a short meditation on spiritual instruction, which is then followed with the first report. Usually of Fr. Benedict's choice, two of them are prepared and given for increasing our knowledge on Our Lady and the liturgy. We close by discussing what little work, or rather, apostolic action we can do in honor of Mary. An apostolic action could be reciting an extra decade of the rosary, practicing a hymn, or even just an extra prayer.

In the times we live in now, strong devotion to Mary is so unbelievably necessary for salvation that it would be almost impossible to attain the glories of heaven without her. Why trudge through the problems and sufferings of this life alone, when you could be doing it with the assistance of our Heavenly Mother? Let us focus on giving honor and glory to Mary, not only in time of need and temptation, but to give her the honor and glory which she deserves out of love. It is a wonderful thing to try to increase our love and devotion to so good a Mother. So ask yourself, "Do I have the strong love and devotion to Our Blessed Mother that I should have?"

The Soft Breeze *by Jorge Cruz, gr. 12*

It was afternoon and the streets of Jerusalem were filled with people. The vendors had their carts filled with fruit and vegetables: crisp cabbages, ruddy radishes, lofty lettuces, amiable apples, and flavored figs. You could hear the boisterous women laughing and gossiping, children screaming. Loudly were rowdy men arguing with vendors for a discount or an unjust amount, and money changers fiddled with their coins. The raucous sound of the flute, drums, lyre, and stringed instruments filled the market. The outcries of mules, sheep, chickens, doves, oxen, and camels roamed around. The sound of loud conversation and the racket of the carts rambled. Throughout the city, a plague spread. It was noise.

Yet, amid this turbulence walked God. While the people chattered, a small procession went unnoticed to the temple—a procession led by silence. Mary carried the divine sleeping child, and Joseph, the silent, held two doves. What a contradiction this is to our world! You go outside, and all you can hear is noise: televisions, cars, radios, people, and music blasting at your ears. "After the wind, an earthquake: the Lord is not in the earthquake," says the Book of Kings. Since God is not in the noise of the world, who is but Satan? Hell, the kingdom of Satan, is a place filled with screeching, and excruciating noise. The infinite screaming of damnation and the filthy blasphemies of the demons resonate in that cauldron of fire. We live in a time filled with hellish noise, noise that doesn't let us hear the God that lives within us.

But, how noisy was the Holy Family? Mary contemplated

the living God in her hands and spoke to Him in the hall of her heart. Joseph looked upon the two beings most cherished by the Trinity and fell, as it were, into an ecstasy of love. They were silent within and without. Even those two little doves were silent; it was almost as though they understood who was in their midst and the purpose for which they were selected, and they were happy to give themselves as a sacrifice for the silent Queen. They were still and passive; they were silent.



A visit by Saint Nicholas for the young children is a tradition here after Mass on the first Sunday of December.

How different is this from ourselves? We might be quiet on the outside but loud and noisy on the inside. Our minds and hearts are filled with the noise of passion and sin. Our hearts are filled with the din of the attachments to the world and imperfection. The devil fills us with havoc: fears, concerns, preoccupations, and unrealistic scenarios. Our hearts are troubled with past and present faults. Murmurs and contradictions ring within us. The devil uses this noise in our memory and imagination to make us think only of superfluous thoughts and desires.

Our hearts make a din. We do not hear the voice of the living God within us. God walks upon the calm waters of our souls, and the only way to hear the soft trickle of His footsteps is by silencing ourselves, within and without. "After the fire, a whistling of a gentle air," says the Book of Kings. God was in this gentle breeze, for He speaks to us in the calmness of our soul.

God was first incarnate in the heart of Mary. Mary conceived God within the bowels of her soul, through silence. Holy Scripture tells us, "Mary kept all these words, pondering them in her heart." Enclosed within her heart, Mary joined herself continuously with God. She pondered on divine things. Concerning Mary, Sr. Elizabeth of the Trinity states, "I need no effort to enter into the mystery of God dwelling within the Blessed Virgin... When I read the Gospel that

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Mr. David Hyde is our science teacher this year.



Our first major snowfall was beautiful, but the snow didn't last long.



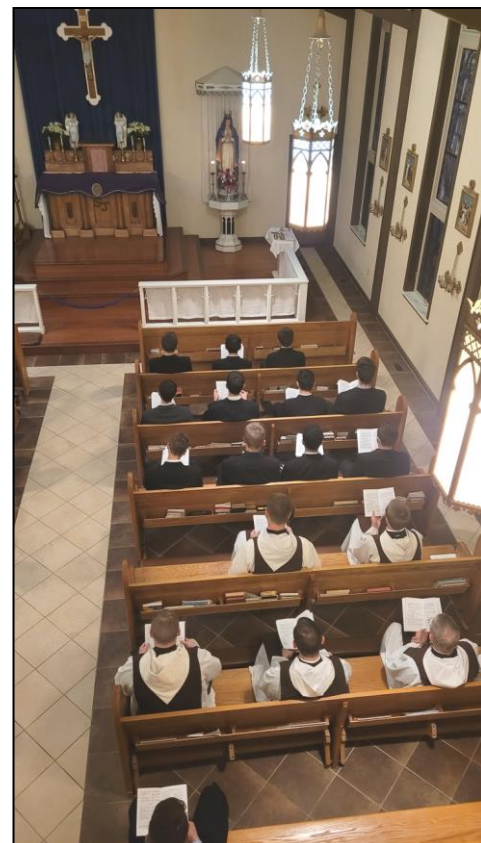
An occasional trip to a local bowling alley is a nice break for the seminarians.



The 1st, 2nd, and 3rd graders performed for the Christmas Program.



So far, we have had two 8 in. snow falls this season.



We chant Vespers of the Divine Office on the Sundays of Advent.

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The Soft Breeze

Mary went in haste to the mountain of Judea on her charitable mission to her cousin Elizabeth, I can see her as she passes, calm, majestic, recollected, holding commune within herself with the World of God. Her prayer was always the same as His: ‘Ecce, here am I... the handmaid of the Lord.’”

A Yearly Warning *by Jonathan Lehen, gr. 12*

A new year has begun. Where did the previous one go? It has passed like a storm over a meadow. Everyone is now a year closer to the Day of Judgment. In comparison to eternity, this should make us think of how short life really is. Eternity is what matters; it is where we all will be after death.

Only one of two places will be our lot: everlasting happiness in heaven or eternal damnation in hell. Enlightened by this thought, we should consider that, being another year closer to eternity, we need to work on saving our souls. Who, may I ask, would want to go to hell? Anyone reading this would surely deny such a ridiculous wish. Yet, all the same, there are people who consent to that desire. They are those who commit a mortal sin. If we do not want to be part of that group, then we must always stay in the state of grace and live our lives faithfully in the service of God.

We have been given another year. This does not mean that we now have all the time in the world to do whatever we want. Rather, the start of this year should be the time that we start anew in living our Faith. We should make some new resolutions that we will work on during this year and

overcome bad habits that might have been developed in the previous year. By doing these things, it will be easier to get to heaven and we will become more pure in the eyes of God.

During this New Year, let us remember how short life is and that we were not made for this life. We were made for eternity. Undoubtedly, living our lives in fear and trembling is what will bring us to heaven, but living in sin is what will bring us to hell. The fact that we have entered into another year does not mean that we will live through it. Our life could end any day. It could be now, or it could be in many more years. Only God knows such things. Living each day without committing sin is what matters now. Leave the rest to God.

Sheltered

The past year has been one of conflict and chaos. Those who follow the news are well aware of what I am referencing. Yet for the seminarians, the news of the world is far from their thoughts. Truly, they are sheltered here in this blessed place.

Of course, when there are major events that occur in the world we do not fail to inform the seminarians. Nevertheless, this news does not become a focus for them. Rather, they are busy each day with their daily routine of prayer, study, activities, etc. That is a good thing. How many people become preoccupied with secular events! They read everything they can and then become depressed. They worry about what they cannot change.

We cannot change the evils in the world, but God can. So instead of becoming absorbed in the news of the day, let us pray for the conversion of sinners and the salvation of souls. Go on with confidence in and love for God, as you live your

daily life. May this New Year be for each of us a succession of days in which we serve God and look forward to eternity with Him.

We can all learn a lesson from our Catholic youth who experience the joys of life, as they seek to do God’s will. Please continue to pray for these seminarians, that they will grow daily in the love and service of God. Pray that many more will come to join their company. Be assured that we also pray for all of you and your needs and intentions, especially that God will bless you and your loved ones in this New Year of 2024.

Fr. Benedict Hughes, CMRI



The seminarians make the most of the snow on a Sunday afternoon.

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